

DOES MY BUSINESS GENERATE DANGEROUS WASTE?


A guide for small quantity generators

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6700 or email at hwtrpubs@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.



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Dangerous waste is more common than you think.

Businesses are legally and financially responsible for evaluating and managing dangerous waste properly. If mishandled, these wastes could be harmful to our health and environment. Dangerous waste shouldn't be thrown away, placed on the ground, or flushed down the drain. The rules for proper management are in Washington's Dangerous Waste Regulations (Chapter 173-303 WAC).

Many types of businesses in Washington generate dangerous waste. Here are just a few:

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Auto repair and maintenance |  Printing and graphic arts |
|  Dry cleaning |  Construction |
|  Health care and dentistry* |  Lawn and garden care |
|  Metal working |  Gas stations |
|  Painting |  Nail salons |
|  Building, cleaning, and maintenance |  Hardware stores |
|  Laboratories* |  Furniture and wood refinishing |

*This doesn't include biohazard or human waste. However, many discarded pharmaceuticals are considered dangerous waste.

Know your category.

Any facility creating dangerous waste is called a “dangerous waste generator.” Generators are separated into three categories based on how much waste they generate per month: small, medium, or large quantity generator.

When you generate less dangerous waste, you’ll have less liability and risk. With less waste, you’ll have fewer health and safety hazards, less environmental impact, and lower disposal costs.



SQG

Small Quantity
Generator



MQG

Medium Quantity
Generator



LQG

Large Quantity
Generator



Learn more at: ecology.wa.gov/GeneratorCategory
See [Guide to Dangerous Waste by Generator Category](#)¹

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2004018.html>

How do I know if I have dangerous waste?



If your business uses hazardous products, you might generate dangerous waste.

Before disposing of wastes, figure out if they'll be designated as dangerous waste. Carefully read product information on the safety data sheet. Look for warning labels such as flammable, explosive, toxic, or environmentally hazardous.



If you do not have product information, you may need to reach out to the manufacturer or test the waste. If you discard any of these materials, you probably have dangerous waste:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Solvents |  Fertilizers |
|  Paints and thinners |  Pesticides |
|  Adhesives |  Light bulbs* |
|  Oil* |  Batteries* |
|  Antifreeze* |  Shop towels with solvents |
|  Disinfectants |  And many more |


* If you generate these waste types, you can manage them under different standards (**Used oil**: WAC 173-303-515; **Antifreeze**: WAC 173-303-522; **Lamps and batteries** may qualify as universal waste: WAC 173-303-573).

What do small quantity generators need to do?

1

Designate your waste


Designation is the process used to determine if your waste is a dangerous waste. All waste you create at your facility must be designated promptly at the point of generation. Inadequate designation creates risks, may result in improper disposal, and can harm human health and the environment.

 [ecology.wa.gov/
Designation](https://ecology.wa.gov/Designation)
WAC 173-303-070

2

Determine your category

Count how much dangerous waste you generate each month to determine your generator category. Your category may change from one month to the next and it's your responsibility to know which regulatory requirements apply.

 [ecology.wa.gov/
GeneratorCategory](https://ecology.wa.gov/GeneratorCategory)
WAC 173-303-169

3

Handle and store waste safely

Manage dangerous waste to protect human health and the environment. Remember to keep containers closed except when adding or removing waste, separate incompatible wastes, and ensure containers are in good condition.


 [ecology.wa.gov/
DWContainers](https://ecology.wa.gov/DWContainers)
WAC 173-303-170(2)(a)(i)(C)



4

Submit an annual report

If you have an active EPA/state identification number, submit a dangerous waste annual report. This report summarizes your dangerous waste activities in Washington. Annual reports are due every year by March 1.

 [ecology.wa.gov/
DWReport](https://ecology.wa.gov/DWReport)
WAC 173-303-220

5

Recycle or dispose of waste

Dispose of dangerous waste properly by using a permitted waste facility or legitimate recycler. Contact your county's solid waste department or call 1-800-RECYCLE for local options.

 [ecology.wa.gov/
DWDisposal](https://ecology.wa.gov/DWDisposal)
WAC 173-303-171(1)(e)

How much dangerous waste can I generate per month?

To be a small quantity generator, there are monthly limits to the amount of dangerous waste you generate. These are known as quantity exclusion limits or QELs. The QEL is the amount of dangerous waste generated in a calendar month. It is used to determine which rules apply to your site. There are three different QEL groups:



For **most common dangerous wastes**, the monthly limit is **220 pounds**.



For dangerous wastes that are **extremely toxic in small amounts**, the monthly limit is **2.2 pounds**.*



For **residue or contaminated materials** from the cleanup of a highly toxic waste spill to land or water, the monthly limit is **220 pounds**.

If you stay below each of these limits on a monthly basis, you'll stay a small quantity generator.

*This includes extremely hazardous waste (code WT01), and acutely hazardous waste (all [P-listed waste](#)² and some [F-listed waste](#)³ codes: F020, F021, F022, F023, F026, F027).

² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-303-9903>

³ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-303-9904>



How much dangerous waste can I keep on site?

If you're a small quantity generator, you won't have a time limit for accumulating dangerous waste, but there are limits to how much you can keep on site. If you exceed the limits, you'll need to follow large quantity generator rules until all dangerous wastes are shipped offsite.



For **most common dangerous wastes**, the total limit you can keep on site is **2,200 pounds**.



For dangerous wastes that are **extremely toxic in small amounts**, the total limit you can keep on site is **2.2 pounds**.*

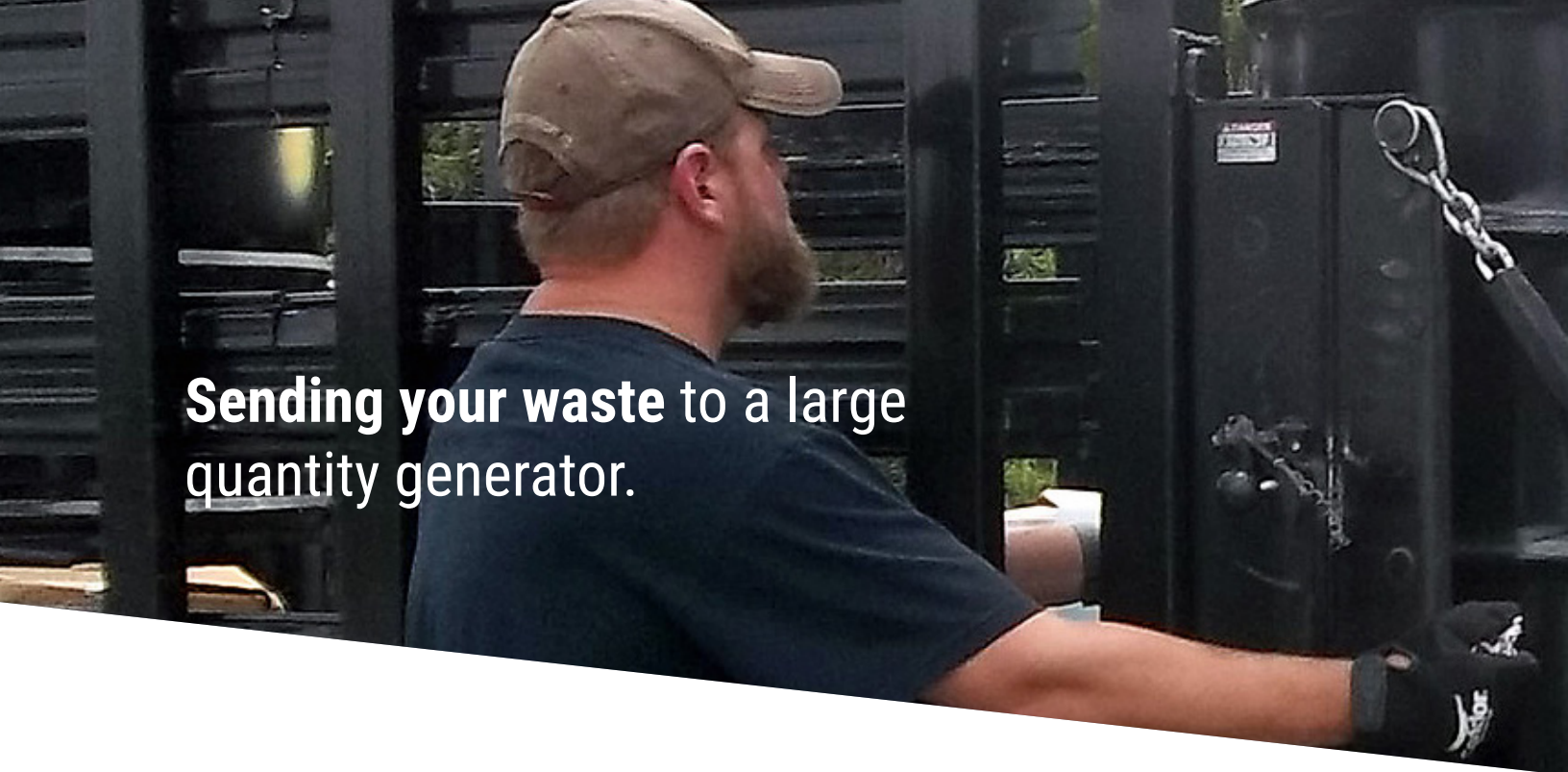


For **residue or contaminated materials** from the cleanup of a highly toxic waste spill to land or water, the total limit you can keep on site is **220 pounds**.

If you stay below each of these onsite accumulation limits, you may follow small quantity generator rules.

*This includes extremely hazardous waste (code WT01), and acutely hazardous waste (all [P-listed waste](#)² and some [F-listed waste](#)³ codes: F020, F021, F022, F023, F026, F027).





Sending your waste to a large quantity generator.

Small quantity generators may transport dangerous waste to a large quantity generator under the control of the same person.⁴ To be eligible, the receiving large quantity generator must meet certain conditions such as notifying Ecology, labeling, recordkeeping, and shipping your waste off site to a permitted facility using a uniform hazardous waste manifest.

If you want to send dangerous waste to an eligible large quantity generator, label containers and tanks as “hazardous waste” or “dangerous waste” along with the hazard(s) of the contents. Labels and markings must be one-half inch in height, unless the container is one quart or smaller.



Learn more at: ecology.wa.gov/LabelDW

See [Focus on: Large Quantity Generator Consolidation of Small Quantity Generator Dangerous Waste](#)⁵

⁴ **Control** means the power to direct the policies of the generator, whether by the ownership of stock or voting rights. This doesn't include contractors, consultants, and transporters who provide dangerous waste management services for the generator.

Person means an individual, trust, firm, joint stock company, federal agency, corporation (including a government corporation), partnership, association, state, municipality, commission, political subdivision of a state, or any interstate body.

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2004016.html>



Alternative standards for episodic generation.

An episodic event is an activity that does not occur during normal business operations that causes an increase in waste amounts for that month. Episodic events may be **planned** (like tank cleanouts or short-term projects) or **unplanned** (like spills, fires, or other unexpected emergencies). Wastes from episodic events don't count toward your generator category; therefore, you may remain a small quantity generator despite a temporary increase in dangerous waste.

To manage waste under the episodic generation rules, you must meet important notification deadlines:

- Immediately contact your HWTR regional office in writing (email or fax) within 72 hours of an **unplanned event**. Submit required forms to Ecology Headquarters within 30 days.
- Submit required forms to Ecology Headquarters 30 days prior to a **planned event**.

Although your generator category remains the same, episodic waste still counts toward the [Hazardous Waste Planning Fee](#)⁶ and [Pollution Prevention Planning](#).⁷ You must report all episodic dangerous waste on your Dangerous Waste Annual Report.

Learn more at: ecology.wa.gov/EpisodicGeneration
See [Focus on: Episodic Generation](#)⁸ and WAC 173-303-173.

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/PlanningFee>

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/P2Plan>

⁸ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1904019.html>

How can I get help?

We can help you understand the rules or find resources to reduce waste. Learn more from our video:

ecology.wa.gov/sqg

For more help, give us a call:

- ▶ Southwest region: 360-407-6300
- ▶ Northwest region: 206-594-0000
- ▶ Central region: 509-575-2490
- ▶ Eastern region: 509-329-3400

